

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment. The gentleman from Georgia is attempting to renew an authorizing fight, which is only a matter of days old, on the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill, and that is not the appropriate way to handle the question of the affordable housing trust.

Our capable authorizers, the chairman of the Financial Services Committee Mr. FRANK, and the Chairman of the Housing Subcommittee of that committee Ms. WATERS, have included an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in their FHA reform bill. That bill was passed by the House last week or 2 weeks ago. I forget which week it was.

Clearly there is a need for more affordable housing in this country. The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University has documented that from 1993 to the year 2003 alone, we have lost 1.2 million affordable units. It is also documented that we have some 8 million households in this country who have incomes below 30 percent of the adjusted median income in their area. Those households all fall within the lowest, most vulnerable category of people who are eligible for assistance under the Housing and Urban Development Department. We are only providing somewhere in the total of 2.5- to 3 million units for all of that 8 million people and households who are falling within that very low-income category. However, we don't intend to step on the turf of our authorizing committee by renewing the fight about that bill, which passed, as I said, just a few days ago, on this bill tonight.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment and urge a "no" vote.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate those comments. I understand the lack of desire on the part of the appropriators to get into the business of the authorizers, but that is the way the system works here. One committee will authorize, and then the Appropriations Committee comes along and determines whether or not there ought to be money.

What this amendment says is that this House ought to say no, we ought not put money into a slush fund, into a housing slush fund that actually takes money away from programs that are demonstrated to have had excellent results, Market-to-Market, the American Dream Downpayment Initiative, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program.

This slush fund will take money away from those programs that have been very, very helpful to individuals across this Nation, low-income individ-

uals across this Nation, who are trying to get into a home. What it will do is substitute it with a slush fund that will be used for political purposes. There is no doubt about it. So it doesn't surprise me, I guess, that the majority party would oppose this amendment.

But I would ask my colleagues on both sides, Republicans and Democrats, to clearly look at this amendment and appreciate that none of us, none of us, ought be using this kind of money, the kind of money that allows low-income Americans to get into their home and have the American dream, realize the American dream, but to do so with political slush fund money. It just isn't appropriate. It is just not right.

So I urge my colleagues to take a serious look at this amendment and support the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. WALBERG

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the Clerk will report the amendment.

There was no objection.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. WALBERG:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Department of Transportation to promulgate regulations based on race, ethnicity, or sex.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor today to pose an important question to this House, and that question is this: Do we really need race, ethnic or gender-based preferences for roads?

Today I am offering an amendment to the transportation bill we are currently debating that would stipulate no funding in this bill may be used by the Department of Transportation to discriminate based on race, ethnicity or sex.

Though this policy may be motivated by good intention, I agree with Justice Clarence Thomas about the DOT's affirmative action programs where he states, "The paternalism that appears to lie at the heart of this program is at

war with the principle of inherent equality that underlies and infuses our Constitution."

Last fall in my home State, Michiganders voted overwhelmingly, 58 percent to 42 percent, in favor of amending our State constitution to outlaw racial preferences in public education, employment and contracting. Like my constituents in south-central Michigan, I oppose any and all forms of discrimination. But I also support nondiscrimination, the practice or policy of refraining from discrimination.

My support of nondiscrimination compels me to state on this floor that every American deserves equal treatment when competing for business contracts, and our Federal Government should treat all applicants for such contracts on an equal basis. The Federal Government should never view any American as part of a group, but rather look at them as an individual. By granting the Department of Transportation the ability to discriminate based on race or sex, this House would essentially create affirmative action preferences for our Nation's highways.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment and ensure that all American businesses competing for public works projects are given a fair, non-discriminatory opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to go further on it. I think it is rather self-explanatory that we are talking here of just assuring the practice that we don't commit discrimination in the process of our hiring and contracting practices.

We in the State of Michigan labored long and hard during the last election cycle, from both sides, to indicate what value there was in making sure that under the context of our Constitution and the laws that have been put in place to enforce that Constitution, that we are each given rights to benefit from those unalienable rights, namely the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness or property. If we were to bridge that with any discriminatory practice, we take that away from one, and we can take it away from all.

For that purpose, this amendment is offered. I would appreciate the support of my colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I am almost speechless with the fact that this very simple amendment has not been challenged aggressively yet. It is a straightforward amendment. As I said very clearly and sincerely, not only am I opposed to discrimination, I am also strongly supportive of nondiscrimination. For that reason and